

Minutes – Regular Meeting
Baltimore County Soil Conservation District
January 20, 2026

The regular meeting of the Board of Supervisors of the Baltimore County Soil Conservation District was called to order by Chairman McGinnis at 8:00 am with the following present:

Supervisors

Mark Duvall
Eric Hadaway
Toby Mays
Mike McGinnis
Steve Smith

Staff

Essy Frey, BCSCD
Sam Cox, NRCS
Dave Bachman, BCSCD
Addie McCaul, MDA

Associate Supervisors

Jesse Albright

Others

Jess Armacost, BCDOA
Erika Crowl, UME
Katie Dell, BCPS
Sara Winter, DNR
Tiffany Wendland, BCPS
Darren Alles, MDA

Katie Dell, Sara Winter and Tiffany Wendland introduced themselves to the Board. The Office of Science has started a pilot program with three schools participating in the Envirothon. They asked the Board to consider sponsoring a Baltimore County Envirothon team with a donation of \$750.00 State Envirothon dues as well as a contribution toward the printing of Envirothon team tee shirts.

Motion - Smith moved to pay \$750.00 in State Envirothon dues and up to \$500.00 toward the cost of Baltimore County Envirothon team tee shirts. The motion was seconded and passed.

Motion - Duvall moved to approve the minutes of the December Board meeting. The motion was seconded and passed.

Treasurer's Report – Hadaway stated the Treasurer's report for December was in the Board packet and asked if there were any questions. Fees received in December were \$25,955.41. The County has requested our FY'27 budget request. The grant we've requested is essentially the same as last year. We rec'd a \$1,500.00 Endowment Grant for our 2026 National Envirothon Dues. Duvall asked if we could apply for more than the \$1,500.00 and use the excess for our county Envirothon expenses. We received \$10,762.00 in Weed Spray Income in December.

Motion - Hadaway moved to approve the December Treasurer's report and pay the bills. The motion was seconded and passed.

District Conservationist's Report – Cox informed the Board that a few construction projects are going on in the county. A Forage Conference is scheduled for Thursday January 22, 2026 in Mt. Airy from 9am-3pm at the Fire Company Activities Building. The Central Maryland Vegetable Growers Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, January 21, 2026 at Summit Manor in Hereford at 8:00am.

CREP Update – Just a reminder that when people have a CREP contract, they are required to do basic maintenance and management on that contract, but FSA must be notified first. Three contracts for FY2026 and five contracts for FY27 are up for re-enrollment, however, re-enrollment status is unknown and no new CREP sign up period has been announced. We have four farms interested in a new enrollment period.

Regenerative Agriculture Pilot Program (Regen Ag) - This program is run through EQIP and CSP and is a whole farm planning program. It has a five year contract, and by the end of the contract, you must meet the soil and water quality resource concerns. You must be implementing a main core practice- 328, 340, 590 etc.. You must complete Soil Health testing in 1st and last year of the contract and report the results. This program will account for 50% of our state allocations, 25% in EQIP and 25% in CSP. Signup deadline was 1/16/2026 and applications must be ranked by February 13, 2026.

CSP – This program was overhauled this year. No renewal of contracts and now has a base of \$4,000.00 per contract. There are no more enhancements and must meet Stewardship Thresholds.

RCP – This program has certain pots of money available to certain counties. It does not give a direct deposit to farmer within two weeks, it usually takes at least a month for payment.

State Office Updates

MD NRCS State Conservationist, Suzy Daubert, is on detail to Delaware as the State Conservationist for both MD and DE. Eric Hines is back from his heart surgery

District Manager's Report – In Ensor's absence, Frey stated that the written report was in the Board packet and asked if there were any questions. There was some discussion on the outcomes of the meeting with DEPS held January 15, 2026. Duvall reported that as long as a current conservation plan (within last 10 years) is submitted to DEPS along with an ag. building application request, DEPS will not come out for a site visit.

Motion - Smith moved to accept the District Manager's report. The motion was seconded and passed.

Staff – McCaull informed the Board that the EQIP deadline was 1/15/26. Staff continue to work on surveys for various different practices. MDA PEPS (Performance Planning & Evaluation Program) will be conducted Monday, January 26, 2026. Technicians and planners have a few projects on which they need engineering assistance from Warren Johnson or Lori Ashbaugh. BGE is doing a culvert replacement and stream restoration project through wetland areas on Tom Reynold’s property. Tom contacted our office looking for companion practices, etc.

Extension Agent – Crawl informed the Board that interviews for the Nutrient Management Consultant position are scheduled for Friday, January 23, 2026. An eight week Beginning Farmers Program will begin February 10, 2026. The Taste of Maryland is scheduled for February 5, 2026 at Live! Casino & Hotel Maryland at Arundel Mills. The McGinnis family will be inducted into the Governor’s Agriculture Hall of Fame for 2025 at this event.

MDA Area Coordinator – Alles distributed copies of his report. (A copy of which is attached to these minutes.) He stated that the State DM position description will need to be updated for Byron Petrauskas’ review. MDA’s plan is to advertise the DM position in the Fall of 2026, hold interviews January 2027 and select a candidate by March 1, 2027. This will provide an 8 – 10 week overlap prior to Ensor’s scheduled retirement in May of 2027.

Baltimore County Division of Ag. – Armacost provided copies of the latest DOA newsletter. She informed the Board that the Ag. Advisory Board submitted draft recommendations to the County at the January 7, 2026 meeting. The second Farmers Fair held January 13, 2026 had 17 producers attend. Women in Ag Chat speakers will include Dr. Ginny Merryman on January 26, 2026 at 8:00am and Andrea Haines on February 23, 2026 at 8:00am, both at the Ag. Center.

Committee Reports

Urban – Bachman reported the time until review for December was 11 days. There are seven active priorities currently in the office for review. The urban department met with Baltimore County Stormwater Review Section on December 11, 2025. Overall, the discussion was very productive.

Personnel – No report.

Agriculture - No report.

Finance – No report.

Old Business

MOU With Baltimore County - No new information.

State Funded District Manager Position – Covered previously during this meeting.

Draft 1/20/26
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Page 4

Employee Handbook – Still making updates to this, hope to have ready for Board review by the February 17, 2026 Board meeting.

Proposed Organizational Structure for the BC Dept. of Ag. (DOA)- Ensor still has not rec'd any answer to two emails sent to Armacost regarding the flow chart included in the Proposed Organization Structure

SWM of Ag Buildings – Covered previously during this meeting.

FY 27 Budget - Frey stated that the 1st attempt at this budget had been sent out and asked if there were any questions. Smith requested a budget run be prepared to include a 15% undesignated reserve. Duvall reminded Frey to add a line item for State Employee Training as approved at the December 2025 Board meeting.

New Business

District's Work Plan –

Motion – Duvall moved to approve the District's Work Plan for 2026 as written. The motion was seconded and passed.

2026 MASCD Winter Meeting – Mays, Hadaway and McGinnis will be attending the meeting scheduled for February 9-10 at the Westin in Annapolis.

District Committees – Frey reminded Supervisors which of them are on each District Committee.

Urban Committee – Steve Smith (Chair), Eric Hadaway, Jeff West
Personnel Committee – Toby Mays (Chair), Eric Hadaway, Jim Ensor
Agriculture Committee – Toby Mays (Chair), Mark Duvall
Finance Committee – Eric Hadaway, Steve Smith, Essy Frey
Outreach Committee – Erika Crowl
**Mike McGinnis (Board Chairman) oversees all committees.

Being no further business, the regular meeting adjourned at 10:01 am. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 17, 2026 at 8:00am.

Respectfully submitted,

Esther L. Frey
Administrative Assistant